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EDITORIAL COMMENT

WORK DONE AND TO BE DONE

With the beginning of a new year, we naturally look backward and give thought to those things for which we have been striving and have or have not accomplished, as may be, and also make plans for the completion of unfinished work or for new undertakings. What applies to the individual, applies to groups of individuals. In our organization life, as we look back, certain things accomplished stand out distinctly: the improvement of the nursing care given to patients in general hospitals, through the efforts of the teaching body; improvement in the nursing care of the poor in their homes, through the efforts of visiting nurse associations; the securing of state registration for nurses in most of our states and with it the gradual improvement of the educational status of the nurse; the organization of our three national societies, the development of the Red Cross Nursing Service. At the present time we are occupied with the reorganization of the American Nurses' Association and its affiliated societies, with the immediate work of securing a national charter.

But with even so much accomplished, we are appalled as we look about us by the realization of the groups of people who are still inadequately nursed: the middle class people in their homes, the infirm and sick in the almshouses though so much thought and study have been given both these groups with apparently little result; the inmates of the vast majority of hospitals for the insane; and the patients in most of the tuberculosis sanatoria, whether under public or private control. That the nursing in many places is inadequate, we know from the few women who have tried to improve conditions and who have been able to do so little to break down political domination and public indifference to the daily comfort of those who are out of

sight and too often out of mind, or to obtain the right sort of nurses for this service.

What do we know of the nursing care of the sick in institutions for the blind, for the feeble-minded, or in reformatories and prisons?

The great nursing body has made it its business to demand the highest degree of care for patients in the general hospitals. Is it not our responsibility to investigate and improve the care given these other groups? We cannot expect the younger nurses to be interested in these problems. They have not had sufficient experience in life to realize the tragedy involved or to be moved by the appeal of the helpless. This is work for women to take in hand who are seeing nursing from a different standpoint.

Let us take as an illustration the care of the tubercular. This is one of the great problems because of the fear of the average person of contracting the disease. We believe it is right for young nurses to avoid being shut in with these patients, when possible, although our highest authorities seem to agree that this disease is contracted during childhood and only develops when for some reason in later life the resisting power is impaired. If it is true that persons past the age of forty are practically immune, then this particular work which calls for sympathy and motherliness, combined with the best nursing knowledge and skill, should make its appeal to the mature women who are growing weary of the more strenuous varieties of nursing work. The majority of the patients in sanatoria are young, of the student age, they have not lost their joyous outlook on life, which is so great an asset for recovery, and the work is largely in the open, so that living among those in the curable stages is not so depressing as living among some of the others to whom we have referred. There is no one group of people who more need the highest kind of nursing care than those who have passed the incipient stage. We are constantly meeting men and women who have been at some time given up as hopeless with this disease, who have been restored to apparently perfect health by being placed under proper living conditions with the best medical and nursing care, and we believe the time will come when greater numbers of the advanced cases will be restored by such means. At present the efforts of the institutions and specialists are concentrated on the care of the patients in the early stages.

In the other groups we have named, there is also a great field of work for nurses of more mature years. How to secure good nursing care for such patients, under working and living conditions which are possible for cultivated people, is one of the great problems that are immediately before us. We should like to hear from women engaged in these institutions just how the great nursing body can give help.

We have had, during the present war in Europe, evidence of the eagerness of highly educated, untrained women to perform the most menial services for the wounded soldiers, not only in caring for them as they were brought to the hospitals, covered with grime from the trenches, but in washing faces and hands, cleaning uniforms, carrying trays, serving nourishments under the supervision of trained nurses. This would seem to show that if we could present the need of the masses in the proper way, our training schools would be crowded with the right kind of applicants, anxious to alleviate any kind of suffering. We cannot believe that it has been only the glamor and excitement of war which has influenced these women. We need a great leader to arouse this sentiment.

SELF-GOVERNMENT

At the state meeting held in New York City in 1915, the paper on Student Government presented by Miss Carling and published in this issue of the JOURNAL aroused a very interesting discussion. At the time, partly because of the unusual length of the paper, pressure for space and because the subject did not seem to be one for which our readers, generally, were ready, we postponed its publication. Suddenly there comes to us from a number of different directions a desire for information on this subject, and it would seem to be the next step forward in training-school administration to be considered with the new year.

Miss Carling has covered in her paper all the reasons for or against student government that we have ever heard advanced. We know that a number of superintendents who have tried this experiment would not care to repeat it. In our judgment, the modified form of self-government which Miss Carling suggests of having one or more members of the faculty act with the students' committee would be a safer way of introducing this system than to entrust its workings to a committee composed entirely of pupil nurses. When such a system has become established, it may be safely left to the nurses alone. The fact that our pupils are, on an average, so much more youthful than they were in earlier times makes the necessity for developing a sense of responsibility one of the questions that the superintendent of today has to consider. Like many other problems equally difficult, whose solution has been found, a modified form of self-government will undoubtedly be worked out in the near future.

With the development of club houses, where graduates, old and young are living together in large numbers, problems of household

government also arise. A house committee of the permanent residents, to act with the board of governors in maintaining conformity to a few necessary rules, might simplify the administration of such clubs. A few thoughtless members can become a serious menace to the good order and reputation of such graduate groups.

We shall be glad to have for the Letter Department reports from nurses' homes and clubs, such as the one given in this magazine. It is the combined experience, whether of few or many, which is a help to anyone trying to make such suggested changes.

WHEN FAR FROM HOME

Our attention has been called to a paper read at the Missouri State meeting in Kansas City, recently, showing a tendency of nurses to wander about the country unattached to their own or any other nursing organization, an instance being given of a nurse who had died in a strange place, where nothing was known of her friends or family. We have previously warned nurses against this custom, being without means of identification in case of accident or death.

We have also warned them against accepting positions in distant places without having made proper investigation of the standing of the institution or organization that is to employ them or of starting off on a long journey to fill an uncertain position without having in sight money enough with which to return. One should be careful from whom offers of positions are accepted, that they are people acting with authority or, as is shown in the little paper referred to, they may prove not reputable. Nurses going into any community where there is a nursing organization, whether an alumnae or a county society, will be made welcome as guests and will be given an opportunity to become acquainted with the nurses of the community. We have constant evidence of this from nurses who, having gone to strange places, express their appreciation of the courtesy extended to them by the local organizations. Any nurse who can present such credentials as show her to be a graduate of a reputable school, a member of her own alumnae association and registered, is made welcome unless she proves herself unworthy.

CHICAGO PREPARING FOR A CENTRAL SCHOOL

It is now years since the first definite plan was proposed for central schools for nurses in a paper read by M. E. P. Davis at a meeting of the Superintendents' Society, now the National League of Nursing Education. The idea has been approved by the prom-

inent leaders in the teaching field and has been commented upon again and again in reports and discussions at meetings, but in no city of which we know, have definite plans been considered for the establishment of such a school until the present time.

The first training schools in this country were established in 1873. The Illinois Training School was opened in 1880 and has sent from its doors as many women who have rendered distinguished service to their profession as any other school in the United States. This school was organized to do the nursing for the great county institution in Chicago which cares for the poor of the city, but of late years it has been developing courses for affiliated schools and for post-graduate study. It is at present giving affiliation training to the students from nineteen smaller schools, while graduates from two hundred and twenty-nine schools for nurses have taken its graduate courses during the past six years. The directors are now making plans to build a large new nurses' home and to use the buildings and equipment of the school, backed by its splendid reputation, for a great central school for Chicago.

We believe Chicago is, geographically and educationally, a splendid center from which to develop the central school idea and if the directors make as great a success of it as they have of the training school, it is sure to be followed all over the country.

At the time that the Illinois Training school is making its plans for a development and broadening of its nursing interests, the University of Chicago is making plans for the development of medical education along such lines that Chicago bids fair to become one of the great medical centers of the country.

SOCIAL INSURANCE LEGISLATION

Since commenting on this subject in the December JOURNAL we have learned that no less than twenty states are to include in their winter's legislation bills providing for some form of health insurance. As this is a subject so close to the interests of nurses, not only as possible beneficiaries but as probable employees in carrying out the provisions of such acts, we have asked for an article on the subject from the chairman of the Joint Committee on Health Insurance, Martha M. Russell. Miss Russell promises a paper for the February JOURNAL which we are sure, will make the subject more clear to them.

THE NEW YORK INSPECTOR

Twelve superintendents took the civil service examination for the position of inspector of nurse schools in New York State on the resignation of Miss Hilliard. As a result of the contest, Elizabeth C. Burgess headed the list of those eligible to the position and received the appointment, taking up her duties late in December. Miss Burgess is a graduate of Roosevelt Hospital Training School, class of 1904, and served for nearly five years as assistant superintendent of that school. In the fall of 1909, she entered Teachers College, receiving its diploma in Education for Supervision and Teaching in Training Schools for Nurses in 1911. During her second year in Teachers College she held the position of instructor of probationers at Bellevue Hospital. She then spent one year at St. Luke's, New York, as instructor, leaving to become superintendent of nurses and principal of the training school at Michael Reese Hospital, Chicago, a position she has held to the present time.

Miss Burgess has had, therefore, the most thorough preparation for her work and will enter her new position with the good wishes of those concerned with the education of nurses in the state.

A PORTRAIT OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

From time to time we have received inquiries from our readers as to where a photograph of Florence Nightingale could be obtained, suitable in size to be hung in a nurses' home. We have taken the matter up with the Century Company, who loaned us their plate of the engraving by Timothy Cole at the time of our memorial number of the JOURNAL, and have their permission to make an enlarged copy of this portrait. As the initial expense will be considerable, we will not attempt to do this unless we know that a number of orders will be placed with us. The price of such a portrait would probably be between three and five dollars for a single copy. This portrait is a standing figure, three-quarters length, taken by command of the Queen soon after Miss Nightingale's return from the Crimea and at about the time she was most active in establishing the first training school in London.

Two portraits before all others should hang in every training school library or class room, that of Florence Nightingale, who inaugurated the first training school for nurses in the world, as we know them today, and that of Linda Richards, the first American graduate as well as the first American superintendent. We can supply Miss Richards' portrait at a price of \$3.50.